

# The Albany HERALD

By J.D. Sumner

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ALBANY — U.S. Rep. Sanford Bishop said that he's urging the Democratic leadership in both Congress and the White House to focus on reining in the country's growing debt problems in 2010.

A member of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Democrats, Bishop said that spending was necessary in 2009 in the context of such historic economic trouble, but that 2010 is the time for "fiscal restraint."

"We cannot continue to go deeper in debt," Bishop said. "We have to work to bring fiscal restraint back to Washington. Last year was a difficult time that required difficult decisions, but now we have to focus on our future in the context of a balanced budget."

Bishop said that the Blue Dogs are working on a financial package to present to the leadership in hopes of trimming spending in 2010.

Part of the ideals of that fiscal conservatism are rooted in Paygo, or pay-as-you-go legislation, which has been lauded as "responsible and necessary" by the Blue Dogs. Bishop voted for the legislation last week.

To pay for any programs that incur additional costs, that law requires the president to find money within the budget, while any tax cut would require a corresponding increase in tax revenue.

Some costs would be exempt, including Medicare payments to doctors and some tax cuts instituted under the Bush administration in the early part of the decade.

Reining in spending has been the mantra of activists associated with the growing tea-party movement.

Hosting protests and rallies throughout the summer against health care and cap-and-trade legislation in front of Bishop's Albany office, the group is pushing an agenda calling for less government, more freedom and lower taxes, tea-party official Bill Waller said.

Waller, who had his photo taken with Bishop at a breakfast benefiting the Boy Scouts Tuesday morning, is one of the leaders of the local tea-party movement and is the co-chair of Freedomwork's 2nd District.

"Our objective is to educate the public on our feelings about government and to try and combat apathy and create real, meaningful change," Waller said.

Waller, who was photographed with Bishop wearing his Freedomworks shirt, said the group is monitoring the campaigns for the 2nd District seat and plans to communicate its concerns with the candidates as the process proceeds.

Currently, State Rep. Mike Keowen is considered to be the top Republican to challenge Bishop. Lee Ferrell, who ran against Bishop during his last term, is also running and was at Tuesday's breakfast wearing a "Ferrell for U.S. Congress" button.

When asked about the race and the grassroots conservative movement that has begun to chip away at what has traditionally been a liberal Democratic stronghold in Albany and Columbus, Bishop said that he plans to run on his record.

"When you run for re-election, it's time to give account for stewardship," he said. "We've worked hard to make sure that the Marine Base wasn't BRAC'd, and that Fort Benning has continued to grow. My promises remain the same: work on creating and saving jobs, work on providing better education, building stronger communities, supporting farmers and building a strong national defense."